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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000758

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD, EUR/RPM AND EUR/ERA  
OSD FOR POPOVICH

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [HR](#)  
SUBJECT: ZAGREB WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - OCTOBER 30, 2008

Classified By: Rick Holtzapple, POL/ECON, Reasons 1.4 (B/D)

11. (U) AMCIT VRLJANOVIC ACQUITTED OF WAR CRIMES, CODEFENDANT RECEIVES 20 YEAR SENTENCE:

Zeljko Vrljanovic, a Serbian-American on trial in Croatia for war crimes, was acquitted on all charges on October 24 and has returned to the United States after nearly 15 months in detention. Embassy officers were present in the court room throughout the trial. The judge ruled that there was no evidence placing Vrljanovic at the scene of the murders of a Croatian family near the town of Novska in March 1993. This is the first case in which this judge acquitted a Serb charged with war crimes. The co-defendant, an ethnic Serb, received a 20-year sentence, although no physical evidence linked him to the crime. Three other members of the unit named in the indictment are still in Serbia and have yet to be tried for this crime. Prosecutors are likely to appeal the acquittal once the formal written verdict is released. (CZimmer)

12. (U) NEW MINISTERS OF JUSTICE AND INTERIOR OUTLINE MEASURES TO FIGHT ORGANIZED CRIME:

Croatia's new Ministers of Justice and Interior, Ivan Simonovic and Tomislav Karamarko, appeared before the Croatian Sabor on October 29 to describe to legislators the steps they have already taken since their appointment on October 10 to try and crack down on organized crime after two high-profile murders in downtown Zagreb during October. Details of the measures outlined will be reported septel, but include several actions that have been advocated by USG-funded assistance programs over the past few years, including reforms of investigative procedures and a more aggressive approach to asset seizures.

13. (U) SLOVAK PRESIDENT VISITS CROATIA, DEFENDS DECISION NOT TO RECOGNIZE KOSOVO:

Ivan Gasparovic, President of Slovakia, addressed the Sabor on October 30 during his state visit to Croatia. As expected, Gasparovic voiced Slovakia's firm support for Croatia's accession to the EU, even in the absence of a new Lisbon Treaty. More notably, Gasparovic strongly defended Slovakia's decision not to recognize Kosovo, saying "unilaterally imposed changes of borders have no support in international law and cannot be a stabilizing factor." He went on to argue that events in Georgia had "show(n) that our position was justified...It is not possible to invoke international law in one region of Europe and ignore it in another European region."

(C) NOTE: Curiously, Prime Minister Sanader, in his meeting with Richard Holbrooke (see next item), said that his impression after meeting privately with Gasparovic was that Slovakia would eventually recognize Kosovo. END NOTE.

14. (SBU) FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE RICHARD HOLBROOKE VISITS CROATIA:  
Former Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs

Richard Holbrooke is visiting Croatia October 29-31 to give a speech at a private business conference. Ambassador Bradtke accompanied Holbrooke on Oct. 30 to meetings with President Mesic and Prime Minister Sanader. In both meetings, the principle topic of discussion was the situation in Bosnia. Both Mesic and Sanader said they were very concerned about developments in B-H, although Mesic was rather more alarmist about the possible consequences of a crisis there. Details of Mesic's and Sanader's comments will be reported septel.

15. (U) EMBASSY SPEAKER PROGRAM ENGAGES WIDE RANGE OF CROATIAN AUDIENCES:

Responding to the broad interest in the U.S. presidential elections, embassy officers spoke with groups in Zadar, Rijeka, and Zagreb. Political officer Peter D'Amico spoke with university students in Zadar, discussing the U.S. political system, the electoral college and media coverage of the campaigns. His talk received coverage in the local media. Economic officer Derek Westfall spoke with university students at the American Corner in Rijeka, delivering a presentation on U.S. presidents and fielding questions on U.S. politics and history. Management Counselor Tom Favret met with students at an elite Zagreb high school, sharing perspective on the two-party system, political campaigns and the electoral college. Speaking about United Nations reform at the Zagreb Model United Nations simulation, political officer Dan Meges interacted with university students from Croatia and other European countries. The lecture builds on support the Embassy has provided to this Model UN program in the past. SGT Kaleb Griffel of the Embassy's Marine Security Guard Detachment spoke to American studies students at a Zagreb high school about the U.S. Marine Corps, his life in

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Croatia, teenagers in the U.S., and the U.S. education system. (KWetzel)

16. (U) EMBASSY SUPPORTS JAZZ TRIBUTE TO JAZZ LEGEND DIZZY GILLESPIE:

On October 21, the 91st anniversary of Dizzy Gillespie's birth, the Big Band of Croatia Radio Television together with Dizzy's protege on the trumpet, Jon Faddis, showed a packed house of fans what the music of Dizzy Gillespie should sound like. Both young and old were present, but among the older crowd were several who had been present for Dizzy Gillespie's State Department-sponsored tour to Zagreb in 1956. Faddis and his quartet were supported in their visit by an Embassy grant. (KWetzel)

17. (U) SCHOLARSHIP FAIR DRAWS THOUSANDS OF VISITORS:

U.S. Embassy Zagreb participated in the Scholarship Fair 2009 organized by the Education USA partner Institute for the Development of Education on October 22. Drawing more than 7000 visitors and over 35 presenters, the Scholarship Fair is the biggest education event in the region. Ambassador Robert

1A. Bradtke attended the opening ceremony while the PAS presented various USG scholarships such as the Fulbright programs, JFDP scholarship and Ben Franklin Fellowship. The event attracted wide media coverage and the U.S. Embassy's participation was covered on all television channels and in several newspapers. (KWetzel)  
Bradtke